



U.S. Department of the Interior

NATIONAL BUSINESS CENTER

News Release

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Department of the Interior National Business Center's Aviation Management Directorate Continues Efforts to Incorporate Unmanned Aircraft Systems

The Department of the Interior (DOI) National Business Center's (NBC) Aviation Management Directorate (AMD), in conjunction with U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and Aerodyne Corporation, just completed the second ever Raven A Small UAS (sUAS) training course for DOI employees in Las Cruces, New Mexico.

Thirteen students from USGS, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) completed the sUAS training hosted by New Mexico State University, a recognized pioneer in the research and application of UAS technology in the civilian sector. The two week course included 22 classes spanning 80 hours, and was conducted by former U.S. Army RQ-11A (Raven) instructors. Each student received instruction in basic and advanced flight skills, airspace management, aviation safety, emergency procedures, crew coordination, DOI aviation policy and procedures, and mission planning. In addition, each received approximately 5 hours of flight time as vehicle operator and 5 hours as mission operator. The Raven A is a 4.2 pound aircraft with a 55 inch wing span and



Vanessa Stepanek, BLM, Launches the Raven



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has both color electro optical and infrared sensors. AMD provided oversight for the training with its two previously qualified Raven operators, Harry Kieling, Alaska Regional Director, and Rod Russell, Aviation Safety Compliance Specialist. For the past four years, AMD has led the effort to explore the intriguing possibilities and complex requirements of integrating UAS's in support of DOI missions such as wildlife surveys, law enforcement, search, and firefighting support and command and control. "Unmanned Aerial Systems hold the promise of increased resource mission flexibility, effectiveness, efficiency, and safety. The collaborative and risk managed approach we've adopted in integrating them into DOI, as evidenced by this course is key to realizing these benefits and is consistent with AMD's mission "...to raise the safety standards, increase the efficiency, and promote the economical operation of aircraft activities in the Department of the Interior, said Mark Bathrick, Associate Director, DOI Aviation Management." There are now 27 qualified Raven operators in four DOI Bureaus plus the two in AMD and one in the USFS. Cooperative agreements are being finalized with the US Army to afford DOI operators airspace to develop their proficiency. In addition, a number of agreements are being reached with the FAA to allow Unmanned Aircraft to operate in specially designated airspace to enable select bureau missions.



Harry Kieling, AMD Alaska Regional Director; Kathy Neitzert, USGS; Phil Owen, Aerodyne Raven Instructor presenting their Graduation Certificate

The NBC-AMD is an ISO-9001-2008 certified Federal Shared Service Provider, headquartered in Boise, Idaho with regional offices in Anchorage, Alaska; Atlanta, Georgia; Boise, Idaho, and Phoenix, Arizona. They provide services to more than 20 Federal agencies outside of the Department of the Interior through established Interagency Agreements. AMD's mission is to assist customers improve their aviation safety posture and achieve economies and efficiencies in aviation operations thereby allowing customer to focus scarce resources on their core mission.



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The Directorate provides high quality aviation services through established and documented processes based upon continual improvement. To read more about the AMD and their mission please visit: <http://amd.nbc.gov/index.htm>



About the NBC – The NBC is the Department of the Interior’s Shared Services Provider, offering world class business management systems and services to Federal agencies including Finance systems and services, Human Resources and Payroll services, Acquisition services, Aviation Management services, Information Technology services, Executive Coaching services as well as Administrative Support services to include Drug and Alcohol Testing. For additional information about the NBC please visit, <http://www.nbc.gov>